

1. -21 (Canceled)

22. (Currently Amended) ~~The keel joint of claim 1~~ A floating platform, comprising:

a hull having a bottom and a deck spaced above the bottom;

a riser opening extending generally vertically through the hull from the bottom to the deck;

a riser extending through the riser opening;

~~an open top can riser section that is incorporated into said riser, the open top can riser section comprising:~~

an elongated, cylindrical inner tubular member within the riser opening and having connection means for connection the inner tubular member upper and lower ends connected to adjoining riser sections;

an outer tubular member that radially surrounds the inner tubular member and is secured within the keel riser opening and is radially spaced from the inner tubular member, relative to an axis of the inner tubular member, defining an annular space between the inner and outer tubular members; and

an annular flange adapter that rigidly interconnects a first end of the inner and outer tubular members to the inner tubular member, and wherein a second end of the outer tubular member is open and free of attachment to the inner tubular member to allow lateral deflection of the inner tubular member relative to the outer tubular member.

23. – 29 (Canceled)

30. (Currently Amended) The ~~keel joint~~ platform of claim ~~27~~ 22 further comprising a plurality of supports extending radially inwardly from the ~~keel~~ riser opening ~~to contact the stiffening can.~~

31. (New) The platform of claim 22, further comprising:

an upper support extending inwardly from the riser opening toward the outer tubular member; and

a lower support extending inwardly from the riser opening toward the outer tubular member below the upper support, the upper and lower supports being free of attachment to the outer tubular member.

32. (New) The platform of claim 22, further comprising:

a plurality of upper supports extending radially inward from and circumferentially spaced around the riser opening; and

a plurality of lower supports extending radially inward from the riser opening and circumferentially spaced around the riser opening below the upper supports, the upper and lower supports being free of attachment to the outer tubular member.

33. (New) The platform of claim 22, wherein one of the ends of the outer tubular member is located below the riser opening and the other of the ends of the outer tubular member is located within the riser opening.

34. (New) The platform of claim 22, wherein the annular flange adapter is located at one of the ends of the inner tubular member.

35. (New) The platform of claim 22, wherein the annular flange adapter is located at the upper end of the inner tubular member.

36. (New) The platform of claim 22, further comprising a guide sleeve fixed to and surrounding the outer tubular member, the guide sleeve having an end portion that extends past the second end of the outer tubular member, and the guide sleeve having a thinner wall thickness than a wall thickness of the outer tubular member.

37. (New) A floating platform, comprising:

- a hull having a bottom and a deck spaced above the bottom;

- a riser opening extending generally vertically through the hull from the bottom to the deck;

- a riser extending through the riser opening;

- an elongated, cylindrical inner tubular member within the riser opening and having upper and lower ends connected to adjoining sections of the riser;

- an outer tubular member that surrounds the inner tubular member within the riser opening, the outer tubular member having an inner diameter larger than an outer diameter of the inner tubular member, defining an annular clearance; and

the outer tubular member having a first end rigidly connected to the inner tubular member, the outer tubular member being free of attachment to the inner tubular member other than at the first end.

38. (New) The platform according to claim 37, further comprising:

an upper support extending inwardly from the riser opening toward the outer tubular member; and

a lower support extending inwardly from the riser opening toward the outer tubular member below the upper support, the upper and lower supports being free of attachment to the outer tubular member.

39. (New) The platform of claim 37, further comprising:

a plurality of upper supports extending radially inward from and circumferentially spaced around the riser opening for contact with the outer tubular member; and

a plurality of lower supports extending radially inward from the riser opening and circumferentially spaced around the riser opening below the upper supports for contact with the outer tubular member, the upper and lower supports being free of attachment to the outer tubular member.

40. (New) The platform of claim 37, wherein the first end of the outer tubular member is located below the riser opening and a second end of the outer tubular member is located within the riser opening.

41. (New) The platform of claim 37, further comprising a guide sleeve fixed to and surrounding the outer tubular member, the guide sleeve, the guide sleeve having an end portion that extends past a second end of the outer tubular member, and the guide sleeve having a thinner wall thickness than a wall thickness of the outer tubular member.

42. (New) A method of preventing contact of a riser with a lower end of a riser opening extending upward through a hull from a keel of a hull, comprising:

rigidly connecting one end only of an outer tubular member around an elongated, cylindrical inner tubular member, the outer tubular member having an inner diameter larger than an outer diameter of the inner tubular member, defining an annular clearance;

connecting upper and lower ends of the inner tubular member into a riser;

lowering the riser through the riser opening and positioning the outer tubular member within the riser opening; and

as waves cause movement of the hull relative to the riser, allowing the hull to move relative to the riser with the outer member preventing contact of the riser with the riser opening.

43. (New) The method according to claim 42, further comprising attaching upper and lower supports to the riser opening, the upper and lower supports being spaced apart axially, relative to an axis of the riser opening, and extending radially from the riser opening inward.